

## **PART II**

### **FOREWORD**

Miami-Dade County is approaching the “tipping point” in becoming a healthy community. One of the community programs that have contributed to drive this progress is the following report. The Health Foundation of South Florida’s 2004 Mayor’s Health and Fitness Challenge Final Report outlines the planning, structure, progress and summative evaluation of this successful community health program.

The Health Foundation of South Florida, under the convening authority of Miami-Dade County Mayor Alex Penelas, sponsored the Challenge. The collaborative support of many of our finest organizations brought to and engaged our citizens throughout the county in many fun activities. These yearlong activities included: aerobic exercises, 5-K walks, low impact exercises, cooking/nutrition classes and demonstrations of hundreds of other activities were enjoyed by thousands of adults and children.

The success is measured, not only by the participation of our citizens but by the number of people motivated to contribute. These contributions include community involvement, organization contributions, and the leadership of those involved. This event portrays a dynamic and evolving community, self-aware of its challenges and opportunities. Miami-Dade County is purposely seeking to become a healthy county.

In the first few years, of this Millennium, our county has witnessed several very productive health related happenings. The 2002 Mayor’s Health Care Task Force, the Community Voices Miami Action Project Plan (MAPP) Program, the re-structuring of the Public Health Trust of Miami-Dade County, the creation of the Office of Countywide Health Planning, the passing of the county tax to create the Children’s Trust and this Challenge. In addition, this Challenge directly motivated the formation of the Wellness Consortium of Miami-Dade County, led by our Public Health Department.

Thus, a community collaborative of inter-sector health organizations, led by the Miami-Dade County Department of Public Health, is seeking from our Board of County Commissioners for it to apply to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) / World Health Organization (WHO) for designation of our county and community as a Health City Municipality within their hemispheric programs. This process, of 3 to 5 years, can help us to enhance and internalize within our community of thirty-seven (37) cities and municipalities the health programs and best practices to transform Miami-Dade County into a Health City Municipality of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The future is bright, open and filled with opportunities. Already, the University of Miami and a host committee of community organizations are actively working to bring the “2006 PAHO/WHO Hemispheric Health Promotion Forum of the Americas” to Miami. The Forum is scheduled for October 2006.

The programs and activities described here, can be seen as: a model of community involvement, what is possible when a community gets together, what is possible when a county acts together, and of the opportunities created by motivating others (individuals and groups) to act in benefit of us all.

The Health Foundation of South Florida, The Mayor's Healthcare Task Force and their collaborating community organizations have provided us with the leadership and example of how to practice wellness and health promotion at the population level. Wellness and Health Promotion is a much needed community effort as we confront epidemics of many chronic diseases, which are overwhelming our medical care and delivery system. In large measure, these chronic diseases are a consequence of deficient physical exercise, poor nutritional and dietetic habits and other poor health practices that we can minimize and try to avoid by community programs such as these.

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